

**Admission Policy and Procedures to the School of Engineering and Digital
Sciences PhD Programs at the autonomous organization of education
Nazarbayev University**

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Section 1. Purpose and Application

1.1. This Admission Policy and Procedures to the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences PhD Programs at the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University (hereinafter - Policy and Procedures) were developed in compliance with the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Status of Nazarbayev University, Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and Nazarbayev Fund,” and the Charter of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

1.2. This Policy and Procedures establishes the policy and procedures for the management and compliance during the admission process.

1.3. This Policy and Procedures are applied to the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences PhD Programs (hereinafter – Programs) at the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University (hereinafter – University) and its applicants applying to the Programs.

Section 2. Definitions

2.1. Basic definitions and abbreviations used in this Policy and Procedures are:

2.1.1. **Admissions Committee** – an advisory and consultative body of the University established to implement arrangements for admission to the Program;

2.1.2. **Admissions Department** - the unit of the University designated to facilitate admission to the Foundation, undergraduate and graduate programs of the University;

2.1.3. **Admission period** - a set of deadlines for applying to the University, which includes online application, documents review, evaluation processes and enrollment, which may consist of one or more admissions rounds;

2.1.4. **Applicant** – a citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a foreign citizen or a stateless individual taking part in the selection process;

2.1.5. **Application form** – an application for admission to the PhD programs posted in the Personal account;

2.1.6. **CGPA** (Cumulative Grade Point Average) - a calculation of the average of all of a student's grades contributing to the degree;

2.1.7. **Conditional enrollment** – a type of enrollment of applicants to the Programs with a term or terms specified officially by the recommendation of the Admissions Committee of the Programs at the stage of admission and the Decision of the Provost of the University or his/her designated person at the stage of enrollment. This type of admission/enrollment is limited to final year Master’s students or the applicants enrolled with Zero Year of Graduate Programs.

2.1.8. **Enrollment confirmation form** – a form on acceptance or refusal of the admission offer completed by applicants upon its receipt;

2.1.9. **External expert** - a recognized professional with relevant knowledge and experience who is familiar with program domain and is external to the School



in which he/she is involved in conducting reviews and evaluations of applicants, as well as serving as external readers or evaluators to assure quality assurance;

2.1.10. **ETS** (Educational Testing Service) - a private nonprofit educational testing and assessment organization, that administers international tests including the TOEFL;

2.1.11. **GMAT** (Graduate Management Admission TEST) - a standardized test for measuring aptitude to succeed academically in graduate business studies, developed by GMAC, the Graduate Management Admission Council (USA);

2.1.12. **GRE** (Graduate Record Examinations) - a standardized test used to measure verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, analytical writing and critical thinking skills, developed by the Educational Testing Service (USA);

2.1.13. **IELTS** (International English Language Testing System, Academic version) - a standardized test to define the level of knowledge of the English language, jointly managed by the British Council, IDP Education, and Cambridge English Language Assessment;

2.1.14. **Personal account** - online service providing a personal space on the University website (www.admissions.nu.edu.kz) upon registration;

2.1.15. **Program** - one of the PhD programs, specified in Appendix to this Policy and Procedures, provided by the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences;

2.1.16. **School** - School of Engineering and Digital Sciences of the University in which the Program is offered;

2.1.17. **TOEFL** (Test of English as a Foreign Language) - a standardized test to define the level of knowledge of the English language, developed by the Educational Testing Service (USA);

2.1.18. **University** - autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University;

2.1.19. **Zero Year of Graduate Programs** – a two-semester, non-credit bearing, full-time intensive English and refresher course of study for students accepted into an University graduate degree program but who lack the English requirement necessary for immediate entry into the Schools.

2.1.20. Terms and definitions not used in this Policy and Procedures shall be defined by the internal documents of the University.

Section 3. Main Provisions

3.1. Admission Requirements

3.1.1. Admission to the Program shall be competitive basis and based on merit.

3.1.2. In order to be eligible for inclusion in the selection process for admission to the Program, all applicants must meet the provisions of this Policy and Procedures.

3.1.3. The specific admission requirements of each Program are provided in the Appendix to this Policy and Procedures.



3.1.4. Test certificates are considered valid if their results do not expire by the date of application submission by applicants.

3.1.5. The relevance of the academic and experiential background, and the equivalency and appropriateness of earlier degrees, will be determined by the Admissions Committee.

3.2. Application Process

3.2.1. Before the indicated deadline applicants applying to the Program in the Personal account (www.admissions.nu.edu.kz) are required to:

1) accept the consent for personal data processing and complete and upload an online application form;

2) pay the non-refundable registration fee unless exempted by the Managing Council of the University. The amount of registration fee shall be approved by Managing Council of the University;

3) upload scanned copies of the required documents indicated in Appendix to this Policy and Procedures;

4) verify results of valid IELTS or TOEFL certificate scores from the Test Administrator's system and submit its scanned copy.

3.2.2. The Admissions Committee and/or Admissions Department may request additional documents when necessary.

3.2.3. Documents of enrolled students required by this Policy and Procedures and submitted to applicant's Personal account during the admission period are available to the Office of the Registrar in electronic format and used for formation of student's personal folder.

3.2.4. The admission periods are set by the Dean of the School or his/her designated person upon consultation with the Admissions Department and are published on the website of the University.

3.2.5. All submitted documents shall be in English or with notarized English translation.

3.2.6. Providing false and/or incomplete information will result in exclusion from the admission or enrollment process.

3.2.7. Applicants may apply only for two graduate level programs offered by the University in one academic year. In case of admission to both programs, the applicant must choose only one program.

3.2.8. The admission decision is not subject to appeal.

3.2.9. Applicants recommended for admission must provide scanned copies of documents indicated in Clause 3 of the Appendix to this Policy and Procedures as requested by the Admissions Department.

3.2.10. Submission of a complete application package does not guarantee admission to the Program.

3.2.11. Any documents of enrolled students are not subject to return.

3.3. Admissions Committee



3.3.1. The Admissions Committee is authorized to review applications, evaluate applicants and make recommendations with respect to admissions decisions.

3.3.2. The Admissions Committee members are responsible for ensuring that the admission procedures comply with this Policy and Procedures and other internal rules of the University.

3.3.3. Admissions Committee for the Program is composed of faculty members affiliated to the Program and at least one External expert.

3.3.4. The total number of voting members of the Admissions Committee shall be odd, but not less than 5 (five) including at least 1 (one) member as an External expert.

3.3.5. The activities of the Admissions Committee are managed by the Chairperson of the Admissions Committee. Members of the Admissions Committee, including the Chairperson, shall be appointed by the decision of the Provost, or his/her designated person.

3.3.6. The Admissions Committee may have a Vice Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson of the Admissions Committee, his/her powers shall be exercised by the Vice Chairperson. In addition to voting members, the Admissions Committee may include non-voting representatives.

3.3.7. Members of the Admissions Committee cannot give recommendation letters to those applicants who apply for Programs where these members of Admissions Committee make decisions on admissions.

3.3.8. The Secretary of Admissions Committee shall be appointed by the decision of the Provost, or his/her designated person. One person cannot be appointed as a Secretary in more than 3 (three) Admissions Committees of the School. The Secretary is a non-voting member. In the absence of the Secretary of the Admission Committee, the Chairperson of the Admissions Committee or his/her designated person upon consultation with the Dean of the School appoints the replacement Secretary with indication of such replacement in the Admissions Committee Minutes.

3.3.9. The Secretary of the Admissions Committee is responsible for:

- 1) accuracy of information containing the Admissions Committee meeting Minutes;
- 2) coordination of activities of the Admissions Committee, and organization of the Admissions Committee meetings;
- 3) invitation shortlisted applicants to the interview;
- 4) execution of the Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings;
- 5) maintaining applicants' application packages and interview evaluation results (where applicable);
- 6) close cooperation and interaction with the Admissions Department on admission issues;
- 7) authenticity of languages of the Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings;



8) forwarding Minutes of the Admissions Committee meeting for registration and filing to the Admissions Department;

9) implementation of other activities in accordance with the instructions of the Admissions Committee and its Chairperson.

3.3.10. Each applicant for admission to the Program shall be evaluated individually, fairly, comprehensively and consistently by the members of the Admissions Committee. In this regard, the Admissions Committee members shall develop and adopt the most effective methodology/process/selection criteria which will identify applicants whose life experiences, personal attributes, past academic achievement and career goals conform to those of the Program and who are most likely to contribute to, and benefit from, the School's learning environment.

3.3.11. Methodology/process/selection criteria must be applied equitably during the selection processes and should be attached to the Minutes of the first meeting of Admissions Committee for the correspondent academic year.

In case of impossibility to arrange/take either of required entry examinations due to circumstances of force majeure the Admissions Committee is entitled to replace main exams indicated with other exam alternatives. In doing so, the Admissions Committee develops and approves effective selection methodology and evaluation criteria by indicating in meeting Minutes.

3.4. Admissions Committee Meetings

3.4.1. Meetings of the Admissions Committee shall be held as needed during the admissions period with a quorum, defined as the simple majority of the Admissions Committee voting members present.

3.4.2. The Admissions Committee may take votes and make decisions in the meeting through video or audio conferences or in other interactive ways of communication. Such participation shall be recognized in determining the quorum. The means of interactive participation of a voting member of the Admissions Committee shall be indicated in the Minutes of the meeting.

3.4.3. Decisions of the Admissions Committee shall be taken by simple majority of the votes of those voting and counted in determining the quorum. The Chairperson has the deciding vote in cases of tied votes. In cases in which the Admissions Committee has Vice Chairperson, in the absence of the Chairperson, tied votes shall be resolved by the decision of the Vice Chairperson.

3.4.4. Decisions of the Admissions Committee are final and recorded in the Minutes of the meeting(s) by the Secretary of the Admissions Committee according to the specified requirements for preparing Minutes of meeting of the University. The Minutes of the meeting(s) shall include a ranking of all recommended applicants, applicants placed on the waiting list, who accepted an admission offer, deferred admission applicants and voluntarily or involuntarily rejected applicants. The working language of the Admissions Committee meetings is English. The



Minutes in English and Kazakh shall be signed by the Chairperson (or Vice Chairperson, if applicable) and the Secretary of the Admissions Committee.

3.4.5. The Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings are confidential and are not the subject for dissemination to the third parties, except for employees of the University in the frame of their duties.

3.4.6. All Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings are duly stitched, numbered, scanned and bound by the Secretary of the Admissions Committee, registered and stored in the Admissions Department, which is responsible for their safety until being transferred to the University Archive.

3.5. Admission terms and procedure

3.5.1. Applicants meeting the following eligibility criteria can take part in the competition:

- 1) Students in the final Master's program year of higher education institutions;
- 2) applicants who have graduated Mater's program from higher education institutions;
- 3) other specific additional admission requirements set by the School.

3.5.2. The admissions process to the Program consists of the following stages:

1) First Stage – the Admissions Department reviews application packages in the Personal account and checks the compliance with the minimum entry requirements for the Program and provides the Admissions Committee with information on applicants' status on compliance with the entry requirements and complete package of documents before an applicant can progress to the next stage of the selection process.

2) Second Stage - the members of the Admissions Committee review and short-list complete application packages that meet admissions requirements according to the methodology/process/selection criteria developed by the Admissions Committee. All shortlisted applicants will be interviewed in person or via videoconference by the Admissions Committee members.

As necessary, Admissions Committee assigns interviewers, who are members of the School faculty or an External expert qualified in the appropriate area of research. The number of designated interviewers shall not be less than 2 persons per interviewing applicant.

3) Third Stage – the Admissions Committee members makes a recommendation on all reviewed applicants and determine finalists for enrollment based on the review of the admission package and interview results.

3.5.3. Incomplete applications can be progressed to the Second and Third stage only upon the Admissions Committee's request otherwise are rejected by the Admissions Committee.

3.5.4. Applications not progressed to enrollment are rejected by the Admissions Committee.



3.5.5. After reviewing application materials and interview results the Admissions Committee recommends successful applicants for enrollment to the Program directly or on conditional basis.

3.5.6. Applicants recommended for admission and rejected applicants should be notified via electronic transmission by the Admissions Department within 10 (ten) working days of the Admissions Committee's decision.

3.5.7. Applicants recommended for admission to the Program who received admission offers must notify the University of their acceptance or rejection decision in accordance with format and dates written in the notification letter. In case of not accepting or providing the Enrollment confirmation form within the stated time limits the applicant will not be enrolled to the Program and the admission offer shall be sent to a next, most highly ranked applicant from the waiting list.

3.5.8. The Admissions Committee may place on a waiting list the applicants who fully meet admission requirements, but who were not admitted to the Program due to limits in number of places open in the Program. Applicants on the waiting list will be ranked by the Admissions Committee. Should a place in the Program becomes available prior to the first day of classes according to the Academic Calendar of the year of enrollment, it will be offered to the applicants, in order of rank on the waiting list, by a notification letter of admission. Applicants from the waiting list can participate in the additional selection process to study on scholarships other than Nazarbayev University educational grant or sponsorship or fee-paying basis (if applicable).

3.5.9. Enrollment to the Program shall be formalized by the decision of the Provost of the University or his/her designated person.

3.5.10. The decision on enrollment shall specify the source of funding for each admitted applicant.

The sources of funding shall be determined as follows:

1) the state educational order;

2) a specific scholarship and/or sponsorship;

fee-paying basis – for self-funded applicants or applicants whose costs will be covered by third parties (including their employer).

3.5.11. Applicants who have already earned a PhD degree under the Republic of Kazakhstan state fund are not eligible for enrollment under the state educational order to the University's PhD program with or without Zero Year of Graduate Programs.

3.5.12. The number of admitted students shall not exceed the number of places allocated to the Program.

3.5.13. Zero Year of Graduate Programs students are considered as students of the Programs to which they were conditionally enrolled. In order to change from conditional status, students must successfully complete Zero Year of Graduate Programs by passing all English and content courses in accordance with Academic Policies and Procedures for the Zero Year of Graduate Programs of the University.



3.5.14. If the Zero Year of Graduate Programs student fails to achieve the required passing grades and/or the attendance requirement, he/she shall be dismissed from the Programs in accordance with the internal rules of the University.

3.5.15. Zero Year of Graduate Programs students are accepted with the expectation that they will continue to the University PhD degree program to which they applied and for which they were interviewed. Students will not be allowed to change their program of study during Zero Year of Graduate Programs studies. Zero Year of Graduate Programs students who wish to study in the University's PhD program, which is different from the Program for which they were accepted, may apply to another PhD program of the University and submit all the required documents. However, there is no guarantee of placement in their new PhD application even if they are successful in Zero Year of Graduate Programs.

3.5.16. Besides the conditional enrollment associated with the Zero Year of Graduate Programs, conditional enrollment can be practiced in some exceptional cases upon approval of the Provost or his/her designated person. The Provost or his/her designated person retains the right to deny the conditional enrollment. The Admissions Committee recommends to the Provost or his/her designated person for approval of the conditional enrollment in the following cases:

1) Applicant indicated in subclause 1) of clause 3.5.1. of this Policy and Procedures including the students of the University recommended for admission may be enrolled conditionally based on evidence from graduating university that the applicant has completed the educational program and the applicant expects formal issuance of the final transcript and/or diploma by a specified date. In that case, the decision on enrollment shall prescribe the period of time within which the applicant shall provide the necessary documents to the University.

2) Students of the University in their final summer semester of study may be considered for conditional admission to the Program without the diploma and/or official final transcript based on the memo from the school of study of the University indicating that the applicant is eligible to graduate and fulfills the program requirements and will receive their diploma in the next degree conferral. These applicants can be considered for admission with the condition that they submit a final transcript and a diploma by the end of the first Fall semester according to the Academic calendar of the Program of the year of enrollment.

3.5.17. The Minutes of the Admissions Committee will record:

- 1) the reasons for granting conditional enrollment;
- 2) the applicant's area of weakness;
- 3) the option of the term of fulfillment;
- 4) the timeline for the fulfillment of the terms of conditional enrollment which cannot be more than one year.

To change the status of a conditionally enrolled student, all terms must be fulfilled. In the event of failure to fulfill the terms of conditional enrollment, the student will be dismissed from the Program.



3.5.18. Deferred admission for 1 one academic year can be recommended by Admissions Committee with the endorsement of the Dean of the School or his/her designated person in the exceptional cases before the Program starts.

3.5.19. Deferred admission allows an applicant to be considered for enrollment to a Program following year based on previous year application but does not retain earned funding (if any). The awarding of grant or any financial support for deferred admission candidates is carried out in the framework of consideration of new pool of applicants on a competitive basis.

3.5.20. Deferred admission cannot be granted to the conditionally enrolled applicants.

3.5.21. Awarding applicants University grants, scholarship and enrollment on a fee-paying basis shall be carried out according to the procedure established by the internal documents of the University.

3.5.22. The Admissions Committee in cooperation with the Admissions Department shall resolve issues not regulated by this Policy and Procedures independently.

3.5.23. All documents and other materials submitted by or for applicants in connection with their application for admission to the Program become the property of the University and are subject to the University's internal documents and processes concerning confidentiality.

3.5.24. All information related to the selection process of applicants is confidential.

Section 4. Waiver

4.1. The Provost of the University is eligible to waive any provision of this Policy and Procedures.

Section 5. Temporary Provision

5.1. Not applicable.

Section 6. Revision

6.1. This Policy and Procedures to the Programs shall be reviewed within one year after approval and completion of the admission cycle and revised if necessary.

Section 7. Related Documents

7.1. Rules for preparing some internal administrative documents on core activities and students contingent in the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.



Appendix
to the Admission Policy and
Procedures to the School of
Engineering and Digital Sciences
PhD Programs at the autonomous
organization of education
Nazarbayev University

**Admission requirements of the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences
PhD in Chemical Engineering, PhD in Civil Engineering, PhD in Mechanical
Engineering, PhD in Electrical Engineering, PhD in Robotics Engineering, PhD
in Computer Science Programs**

1. Applicants applying to the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences PhD in Chemical Engineering, PhD in Civil Engineering, PhD in Mechanical Engineering, PhD in Electrical Engineering, PhD in Robotics Engineering, PhD in Computer Science Programs (hereinafter in this appendix – Program) are expected to have:

1) an undergraduate degree (Bachelor's degree or equivalent) and a master's (cycle-2) program in a relevant discipline.

Applicants who obtained their degree diplomas/certificates from foreign education institutions must request their official transcripts to be sent directly to the Admissions Department of the University. In exceptional cases that the foreign education institution does not provide such service, hard copy of the transcript can be submitted to the Admissions Department directly by applicant or electronic certified true copy of the transcript by digital credential services or by corporate email of the foreign education institution .

When applicants provide a certificate of nostrification of a diploma issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan or an apostilled document by a foreign education institution, sending an official transcript directly to the University Admissions Department are not mandatory;

2) a minimum CGPA of 2.75 out of a 4.00 or equivalent on applicant's master's degree transcript;

3) the required level of English proficiency indicated in Clause 2 of Appendix;

4) strong reading, analytical and mathematical skills as demonstrated by GRE or GMAT test (optional). Although an official GRE or GMAT score is not an essential requirement, an applicant can enhance her/his application with a competitive GRE or GMAT score;

5) high level of motivation and strong interest in the Program outlined in a statement of purpose for the PhD program (not exceeding 500 words);

6) a curriculum vitae (up to 2 pages);

7) 2 (two) letters of recommendation (at least one academic reference).

2. The required level of English proficiency:



1) the absolute minimum requirement for English language proficiency test reports for admission to the Program is an overall IELTS test score of 6.5 with sub-score requirements no less than 6.0, or the equivalent TOEFL (except Home Edition) score as posted on the ETS website;

Applicants to the Program, at the discretion of the Admissions Committee, can be exempted from submitting the language proficiency test report if:

one of their earlier academic degrees was earned in a country with English as the language of official communication, academic instruction and daily life;

an undergraduate or graduate degree was earned in a program which was officially taught in English. Applicants must provide an official document confirming English as the language of instruction;

the applicant is a graduate of Nazarbayev University.

2) the absolute minimum requirement for English language proficiency test report for conditional admission to Zero Year of Graduate Programs is an overall IELTS test score of 5.5, with no more than one sub-score of 5.0, or the equivalent TOEFL (except Home Edition) scores as posted on the ETS website.

3. Application package checklist for the Program:

1) complete Application form for the Program;

2) scanned copy of national ID or passport;

3) scanned copy of official document confirming name change (if applicable);

4) scanned copy of official degree diplomas/certificates with transcripts.

Diplomas/certificates with transcripts received from Kazakhstani educational institutions must be notarized. Applicants who obtained their degree diplomas/certificates from foreign educational institutions additionally refer to Subclause 1) of Clause 1 of the Appendix;

5) verified score report of valid Academic IELTS or TOEFL (except Home Edition) test certificate downloaded from the Test Administrator system and its scanned copy. The last IELTS/TOEFL certificate submitted to Personal account will be considered in admission competition. IELTS or TOEFL certificate valid (no more than 2 years) as of date of online documents submission. An applicant must indicate the Nazarbayev University as a recipient when registering for the test. In case if the applicant passed the test earlier, he/she can contact the test center and indicate the University as a recipient;

6) scanned document confirming English as the language of instruction (only for applicants who earned their degree in a program which was taught in English and request an exemption from submitting IELTS or TOEFL);

7) verified score report of valid GMAT or GRE test certificate valid as of date of online documents submission and its scanned copy (optional). An applicant must indicate Nazarbayev University as a recipient when registering for the test. In case the applicant passed the test earlier, he/she can contact the test center and indicate the Nazarbayev University as a recipient;

8) scanned copy of curriculum vitae (up to 2 A4 pages);

9) scanned copy of signed statement of purpose for graduate studies (up to 500 words);



10) two letters of recommendation written within the last 12 months, including at least one academic reference (to be provided by referees via University system or in scanned copy).

